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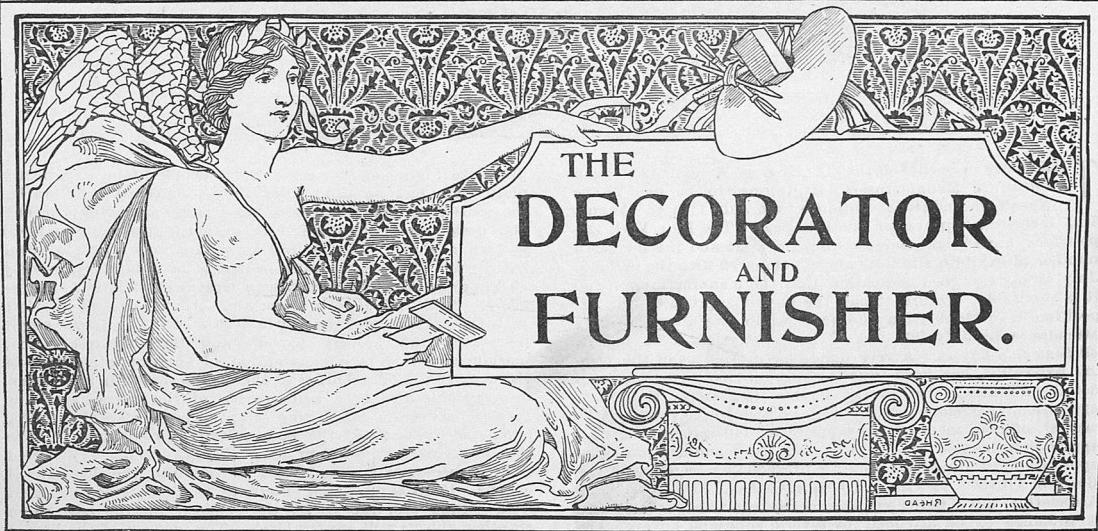
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CONTENTS OF THIS NUMBER.

	PAGE
American Tapestry—Illustrations of Tapestry Panel, Subject, "Flying the Falcon"	55
Artistic Mantel-piece, Executed by Geo. W. Smith & Co., Philadelphia, Pa.....	59
Art or Artificiality?.....	46
Art Trades Supplement.....	71
Cast Iron.....	By W. R. Lethaby 62
Design for a Cottage Hallway.....	By Edward Dewson 49
Denoline.....	49
Designs for Modern Mantel-pieces.....	57-58
Dress and Color.....	By Henri Kelly 64
Design for Wall Fitment.....	By Johannes Schmauk 65
Design for Mantel-piece for Dining-room.....	By S. G. Wilkes 47
Economical House Furnishing.....	By Alice Chittenden 57
Editorials.....	43
Figure in Sgraffito.....	By F. W. Moody 50
Home Decoration—Designs for a Bamboo Book-case and a Curtained Bed, by Helen Hyde. Designs for A Decorated Corner, Fitments for Concealing Doors and for Dividing the Dining-room, by Charlotte Robinson. Design for Frit Plate in Carved Wood, Design for Painted Border, Design for Mural Painting for a Theatre, Design for Tile Decoration in two tones, and Design for Mural Decoration, by Emile Caué 6.....	67-70
Interrupted Staircase, The—Illustrations—Fig. 1, Decoration in the Louis XVI Style. Fig. 2, The Staircase Cut Off and Turned the Other Way	By Edward Lee Young 53
Indian Copper Plaque in Repoussé Work, and Indian Painted Vase from Bombay..	66
Lignomur—Illustrations of The Royal Box Decorated with Lignomur; A Corner of the Café in "Modern Venice," London, Decorated with Lignomur.....	56
Louis XV Interior, A.....	By A. Pape 45
Louis Quinze Interior.....	60
Leather Decoration.....	61
Repoussé Work—Ox-eyed Daisy and Wheat Design for Repoussé Plaque.....	51
Rococo Bronze Lanterns, Illustrations of.....	62-63
Sgraffito Work.....	By Heywood Sumner 50

IT has been truly said that any amount of outside teaching cannot help forward the love of beauty and truth in form and color so much as the proper and decent arrangement of the room and belongings which are constantly before us. How valuable, then, must be a journal that devotes itself to teaching what such proper and decent arrangements of a room are, and thus become the most powerful book that can be written on the subject of truth and beauty.

THE present age, in which financial progress goes rapidly ahead of education in art, is in danger of being surfeited with cheap splendors and the products of false taste and false luxury, so much so that it abhors the use of furniture really well made and chairs that are comfortable and solid, of bureaus that open and shut well, and in fact a distaste of those healthy ideas, which in the making of furniture as in everything else, are in the truest taste, for such taste consists in appearing that which one is, and not that which one might wish to be.

FURNITURE for ordinary use should be simple, strong and serviceable, not too fine in its upholstery, without multiplicity of ornamentation, and, in fact, without those accessories that are as useless as they are expensive. Much ridicule has been thrown upon the "good old times" as being much more uncomfortable and more fanatical than the present, but there is one thing in which our ancestors were ahead of us, and that is that decorative art with them did not mean an endless covering of the wall or ceiling spaces with a prodigality of patterns and colors, but was consistent with the requirements and associations of the period.

JAPANESE art is supreme in wood and ivory carving. Sir Edwin Arnold declares in "Seas and Lands" there is nothing known to him in Europe that comes near what Japanese workmen can achieve. A specimen of ivory carving was shown to him which represented a bag of rice with two or three dozen rats in and upon it. Every rat was as individual in character, position and action as if a special portrait had been taken of him; and every web of the bag, the glistening grains of rice, and the sleek fur of the rodents could not have been better expressed in painting.

At an art store in Yokohama he examined a piece of wood carving representing two life-sized wrestlers struggling in the ring. Every muscle and every vein was delineated, every tendon and ligament was anatomically perfect. It drew a constant crowd, and a policeman informed the proprietor of the store that if he intended to continue the wrestling on his premises, he must engage a posse of policemen to restrain the crowd. He was invited into the store and melted into smiles when he saw that the wrestlers were carvings in wood.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

THE announcement of the Third Semi-Annual American Furniture Manufacturers' Exposition to be held in the New York Industrial Building from July 11th to August 6th, inclusive, appears on another page. The New York Expositions have been a success from the start and the increased number of exhibitors in January as compared with the previous July is a very good indication that the manufacturers found it a profitable venture. That the buyers approve of this Exposition is evident from the fact while the average daily attendance in July '91, was 47 in January last it reached 75, all *bona fide* buyers. A very handsome prospectus of the coming Exposition has been issued, giving all the arrangements in detail and also a list of the buyers who attended the last exposition, that manufacturers may be able to see precisely the market offered them in this exposition. This prospectus, with application blanks, etc., will be sent to manufacturers upon application to Chas. E. Spratt, corresponding secretary of the Board of Trustees, 43rd St. and Lexington Ave., New York. The Association have perfected plans for extensive advertising and it promises to be attended by several thousand buyers. The project certainly has received the approval and support of the Eastern buyers and the fact that one third of all the furniture consumed in the United States is bought within 200 miles of New York, makes this approval very valuable. The strict manner in which admission to this Exposition is guarded has done much to make it so popular with the dealers, while the immense display of samples render it a market that commands their attention and attendance and at the province of the Exposition is solely to bring the buyer in contact with the manufacturer and his offerings when the dealers attend it remains for the goods and the salesmen to do the rest. The dealers certainly do attend the New York Exposition and it thereby fulfills its mission. Nearly 250,000 square feet of space is available but the demand for space is great and those who desire any should apply early. All exhibits are inclosed by the association and each is on the main aisle. The building being so perfectly adapted to the purpose enables this being done.

WHEN we see the beautiful art objects of other countries, the first desire of the unthinking mind is to procure similar objects for its own delectation, without considering that such imitations or adaptations are only suited for the people and the time in which they were elaborated. A few years ago when the Japanese craze was upon us everybody wanted examples of Japanese art, and ignored the fact that such examples depicted the religious myths, history, literature and poetry of Japan and had no identity whatever with European or American history, literature or mode of life. The consequence was that in a few years everybody got tired of Japanese decoration, and wanted something else to take its place, only in time to get tired of the particular something else they adopted. What we do want at all times is the art principles that makes the Japanese or any other school of art so attractive, and not the particular decoration itself. If our decorators were content to copy the spirit of the style, and not the style itself then our own art would be great. The fact that one style after another is given to the public, without any consideration of its intrinsic fitness to the needs of the hour, is the best possible proof of the need of art education on the part of our decorators. All forms of art are worthy of study only that we may absorb the chief elements of the design, and reincarnate them into a new art that will surpass anything hitherto attempted. The decorator of the future must be equipped with an exquisite sense of the beauty of form and color; his work must possess graphic fidelity to nature and he ought to be taught the art of grouping and technical treatment by which alone he can make a loving study of the objects to be depicted. So long as our decorative artists, lack that technical education on which fresh and admirable work is alone based, so long will we continue to simply bring to the market reproductions of the designs of other peoples. Every race should have its own expression in art, for each nation has its own strongly marked characteristics.

THE true function of the floor is to be walked on; the function of the ceiling is to reflect light; the function of the wall is to serve as a background or setting for guests and pictures. In order to see pictures to advantage, the background should be subdued in color, so as not to obtrude itself on your notice. A diaper pattern either of wall-paper or painted, is ap-

propriate if it be not obtrusive. Some people prefer a perfectly plain wall, but we think that the best method of decorating the walls of an apartment is to use a material having a medallion design as a compromise between the fussy all-over floral pattern and the perfectly blank wall. Some people cover their wall with cabinet work in panels, or upholstery, as they do the cabin of a yacht, but such treatment violates a fundamental condition of good decoration—that is, not to interfere with the usefulness of the object decorated. The frieze ought to possess the boldest pattern and the brightest colors, inasmuch as it is the culmination of the decorative wave of the apartment. The border of the ceiling should in some measure resemble the style and coloring of the frieze, with the cornice between in contrasting colors. The whiter the ceiling is painted or decorated the better, for nothing is more fatal to the usefulness of a room than a dark ceiling. Reflected light is necessary to enable us to see into the shadows of objects. If the light which enters the windows is not reflected from ceiling and the frieze, the shadows on the face, as on all other objects will appear black. The purpose of the border in mural decoration is to divide or separate the wall from the ceiling or the wall and dado. The border being based on the idea of an elaborated line is capable of great enrichment; if the decorative lines are more or less conventional in treatment. The ornament should also conform to a regular horizontality of design, and the simplicity in the coloring should balance the simplicity of the ornamental form adopted. Borders are the enrichment of the wall, and in the case of very light wall, the frieze ought to be a few shades darker than the wall, but not so dark as the dado. If, however, the filling and dado be both very dark, a light ground will be best for the border, with a diaper pattern upon it. In Gothic, Norman and Romanesque, or early English church decoration will be found some very beautiful borders.

THAT excellent writer, Theodore Child, in *Harper's Bazar*, laments the decadence of art and exclaims that "never again will humanity recover that poetical exaltation, that delicate tenderness, that exquisite sense of natural beauty, that charm of joyous life which enabled Lippo Lippi to conceive and paint 'The Annunciation,' Botticelli his richly enthroned virgins, and the great artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries their marvellous paintings of saints and angels, with marble and inlaid work of gold and precious stones, their profusion of splendid flowers, their richly-bound missals, their symbolic accessories that represent masterpieces of the goldsmith's art." "In an age," says he, "where science has replaced scholarship and literature it is only by a mental and reconstructive effort that we can penetrate the mysteries of the ancient masters, and it is only by dint of affection and study, sympathy of temperament and contemplation that we can succeed in catching a glimpse of their soul of souls, and vibrating for a moment in unison with their enthusiasm, we are soon awakened to a sense of the moral abyss that separates us from them, and our joy is obscured by a veil of sadness and regret."

We do not agree with Mr. Child's theory of the irrevocable decadence of art. In America a revolution is being undergone that is dethroning the ideal of past ages. We are tearing asunder the past, but with the materials so accumulated there will, we believe, be constructed a still more glorious future. As long as human nature exists there will be souls born full of imagination, enthusiasm and sentiment, who will repeat the artistic triumphs of former ages. Who can tell the art that will be seen in this country five hundred years hence? The progress that has been made since the discovery of America by Columbus is a progress that in art as well as science is largely dependent upon Europe.

With a people so hospitable to the works of foreign masters and so appreciative of work they cannot of themselves create, there is no fear but that the future will develop a race of artists on American soil whose works will equal, and in time excel, the finest productions of Europe. Human nature is built on the principle of the pendulum—the more it swings to any one extreme the swifter and keener will be its movement to the other. A rampant Philistinism starves the aesthetic sense, just as realism in art is the enemy of poetry. Wealth in the hands of the patrons of art will, if used with judgment and generosity, bridge the abyss between hardness and tenderness of soul, and art workers, secure of recognition, will gladly address themselves to their labors with that simplicity and enthusiasm that perfect art demands.